

1837
Newcastle
Box III
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1692
634 A.

Thomas Burnes

REPORT

READ AT THE

FIRST GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

NORTH OF ENGLAND SOCIETY

FOR THE

PROMOTION OF THE FINE ARTS IN THEIR HIGHER
DEPARTMENTS,

AND IN THEIR

APPLICATION TO MANUFACTURES,

HELD 26TH OCTOBER, 1837,

IN THE

LECTURE ROOM OF THE LITERARY & PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE.

WITH THE

RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE MEETING,

A

COPY OF THE RULES,

AND A

LIST OF OFFICERS, MEMBERS, &c.

NEWCASTLE:

PRINTED BY W. & H. MITCHELL, TYNE MERCURY OFFICE,
ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH-YARD.



REPORT.

THE Committee for promoting the formation, in this town and neighbourhood, of an Institution for the cultivation of the Fine Arts in their higher departments, and with reference to their application to manufactures, believe that they cannot better open the proceedings of this meeting, than by a Report of the circumstances which led to their appointment, and the steps which they have already taken to further the object in view.

The attention of the Literary and Philosophical Society of this town was directed to the subject at a monthly meeting, held September 6, 1836, by two papers on the want of provision in this neighbourhood for the cultivation of the Fine Arts, even in their common and higher acceptation, but more particularly in their application to designing for manufactures. The latter subject had previously been brought before the Mechanics' Institute, in this town, in a lecture founded on the Parliamentary Report on Arts and Manufactures. This lecture, whilst it urged the necessity of providing instruction in this department of art, did not propose any plan for immediately effecting the object. It was, however, a specific object of the writers of the above-mentioned papers to recommend the institution of a society whose intention should be to remedy the evil complained of.

This institution, it was proposed, should be in connection with the Literary and Philosophical Society, one of whose rooms, it was thought, it might, in the first instance, occupy. The Literary and Philosophical Society, willing to forward an object so desirable, appointed a committee to enquire into the practicability of the scheme, and to report to the Society at its next general meeting. A report was accordingly made to the effect, that the Literary and Philosophical Society could not afford accommodation on a scale adequate to the objects of the proposed institution; but that the committee being convinced of the great advantage to be derived from the formation of the projected Society, strongly recommended that active measures should be immediately taken for accomplishing the object. The Literary and Philosophical Society concurring in the recommendation of the committee, requested them to consider and carry into effect the best means for promoting the formation of the Institution, with power to add to their number any gentlemen, whether members of the Literary and Philosophical Society or not, who might be likely to assist the undertaking, and who might be willing to act.

The Committee, thus constituted, proceeded, in the first instance, to communicate with the secretaries of various institutions of a nature similar to the one projected, and to request information respecting their constitution and management.

To those communications most favourable answers, with copies of their rules, were received from the Royal Academy of London, the Royal Institution of Scotland, and the School of Arts, Edinburgh.

With the assistance of the information thus obtained, the

Committee proceeded to print and distribute a set of rules or prospectus, as the means best calculated to shew the scope and tendency of the Institution proposed to be formed.

The Committee also printed and distributed circulars, briefly stating their objects, and requesting the co-operation of the public in the undertaking. The Committee, as the result of its labours, are glad that they have been enabled to lay on the table to-day such a considerable list of names, the number and respectability of which were thought sufficient to justify the holding of the present meeting, to carry into immediate effect the objects of the Institution.

The following is an outline of the plan which the Committee propose the Society should pursue in furthering its objects:—

That a school be instituted for the instruction of students both in the higher departments of art, and in its application to designing for manufactures.

That a library of works on art—a collection of anatomical casts for the use of students—a collection of casts from both ancient and modern sculpture—and, gradually, a permanent gallery of works of art, shall be formed.

That the Society shall hold, periodically, exhibitions of works of art, to which artists in all parts of the kingdom shall be invited to contribute. That the periodical exhibitions include models of new and improved machinery, designs for ornamental work of any description, specimens of china, glass, &c., manufactured within this district or elsewhere.

The details of this plan, embodied in the rules for the government of the Society, will be submitted to this meeting for its consideration during the course of its proceedings to-day.

Before closing their Report, the Committee cannot forbear urging upon this meeting, and through it upon the public at large, the desirableness and the utility of an Institution like the one proposed.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his opening discourse to the members and students of the Royal Academy, congratulates them on the institution of an academy in which the polite arts may be regularly studied, and he expresses his surprise that Great Britain should have been so long without such an institution. It is now more than half a century since the Royal Academy was instituted, and at this moment, with very few exceptions, the large provincial towns have not followed the example of the metropolis. But late though it may be, this Committee hail with pleasure the fact that several towns are about forming institutions for the cultivation of the fine arts, and more especially that one is about to be formed in Newcastle under such favourable auspices.

The Royal Academy, useful though it may have been, is too exclusive in its nature to give the student in art those facilities for instruction which it should be the object of such institutions to afford. The limitation of its numbers, the principle of self-election which prevails in it, the private and irresponsible nature of its proceedings, and the monopoly of the best places in its exhibitions by the pictures of its members, are, amongst many other circumstances, adverted to by the Parliamentary Report on Arts and Manufactures as tending greatly to diminish its usefulness. And amongst its regulations there is no attempt to provide for instruction in designing for manufactures. Sir Joshua Reynolds, indeed, says, that if the higher designs flourish,

these inferior ends will be answered of course ; but how can this happen, if the opportunity of seeing exhibitions of works of art and the means of instruction be denied except to a few ? The Committee have already alluded to the Parliamentary Report on Arts and Manufactures, and they would here draw the attention of this meeting particularly to that Report ; in doing so, they cannot help expressing the feeling of humiliation with which they have perused it.

The Committee of the House of Commons state in their report, “ That they advert with regret to the inference they are obliged to draw from the testimony they have received, that, from the highest branches of poetical design down to the lowest connexion between design and manufactures, the arts have received little encouragement in this country.— The want of instruction in design among an industrious population, the absence of public and freely open galleries containing approved specimens of art, the fact that only recently a National Gallery has even been commenced among us, have all combined strongly to impress this conviction on the minds of the members of the Committee. In many despotic countries far more developement has been given to genius, and greater encouragement to industry, by a more liberal diffusion of the enlightening influence of the arts. Yet, to us, a peculiarly manufacturing nation, the connexion between arts and manufactures is most important ; —and for this merely economical reason, (were there no higher motive,) it equally imports us to encourage art in its loftier attributes ; since it is admitted that the cultivation of the more exalted branches of design tends to advance the humblest pursuits of industry, while the connexion of art with manufacture has often developed the genius of the

greatest masters in design." The Parliamentary Report goes on to shew the want of instruction amongst our workmen, especially those employed in the silk and china trades, in the interior decorations of our houses, and in our furniture. This want of instruction is the more to be lamented as it appears that amongst our laborious classes there is an earnest desire for information on the arts. The workmen of Coventry, highly to their honour, have specifically petitioned parliament on the subject. The witnesses consulted by the parliamentary committee have almost uniformly borne evidence to the superiority of several foreign nations over Great Britain in the matter of design, and this is attributed to the greater extension of art, as well as of literature, through the mass of society abroad, arising from the free, open, and popular system of instruction, and the extreme accessibility of foreign museums, libraries, and exhibitions. Another cause of this superiority is the cheapness of art abroad compared with what it is in England. A circumstance is mentioned in the Report as contributing greatly to the superiority of the French in design. In England the designer of the pattern and the person who applies it to the manufacture are distinct persons, in France the workman is himself the artist. There are numerous schools of design in France, amounting to 80 at the present moment; and even in the comparatively small kingdom of Bavaria there are 33, whilst in Great Britain there is scarcely one. Another cause of French superiority in design is, that they study more closely than we do the natural flower, which their ready access to botanic gardens enables them to do. It is to the credit of this town, and more especially to the managers of the institution, that the Newcastle Museum is

open, without a fee being demanded, during certain hours every day, Sundays excepted, to any one that chuses to visit it; and there is every prospect that a botanic, and probably connected with it a zoological garden will be established in Newcastle on a plan almost as liberal; thus affording to the inhabitants a rational amusement, as well as facilities for the improvement of the arts of design.

To supply the needed instruction at a trifling cost is one of the objects of the proposed Institution. By forming galleries of works of art, and by throwing them open to the public, and thus to assist in forming the taste, improving the habits, and consequently increasing the happiness of mankind, is another object which this Committee hope to see accomplished. If it be true, as few will be inclined to doubt, that foreign superiority arises from the circumstances above-mentioned, we can only expect to improve the taste of the British public by pursuing similar means. If it be that we can only look for improvement in our arts of design by applying to them the highest principles of art, how desirable is it that we should form a school which, in the elegant language of Sir Joshua Reynolds, "besides furnishing able men to direct the student, shall be a repository for great examples of the art. These are the materials on which genius is to work, and without which the strongest intellects may be fruitlessly or deviously employed. By studying authentic models, that idea of excellence, which is the result of the accumulated experience of past ages, may be at once acquired, and the tardy and obstructed progress of our predecessors may teach us a shorter and easier way. The student perceives at one glance the principles which many artists have spent their

whole lives in ascertaining, and satisfied with their effect, is spared the painful investigation by which they came to be known and fixed. How many men of great natural abilities have been lost to this nation for want of these advantages. They never had an opportunity of seeing those masterly efforts of genius which at once kindle the whole soul, and force it into sudden and irresistible approbation."

RESOLUTIONS
OF THE
FIRST GENERAL MEETING.

At the First General Meeting of this Society, held in the Lecture Room of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne, on Thursday, 26th October, 1837,

(The Right Rev. the LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM
in the Chair,)

It was resolved,

On the motion of the Right Hon. LORD RAVENSWORTH,
seconded by WILLIAM HUTT, Esq.,

That it is most desirable to encourage a more general cultivation of the Fine Arts, which, from their nature, refine the manners, improve the habits, and consequently increase the happiness of mankind; and that this meeting, viewing, with regret, the inferiority of, and consequent loss to Great Britain, from a neglect of the arts of design as applied to manufactures, think it highly necessary that immediate measures should be taken for a more extensive application of the principles of art to the ornamental part of our manufactures.

On the motion of Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Bart.,
seconded by Col. ROBERT BELL,

That as this town is the centre of a most extensive and important manufacturing and mining district, and as its population and importance are rapidly increasing, it is therefore highly essential that efficient means should be adopted for affording instruction in this neighbourhood in the principles of art generally, but more especially in their application to manufactures.

On the motion of JOSEPH LAMB, Esq., Mayor of Newcastle, seconded by T. E. HEADLAM, Esq., M. D.,

That, taking into consideration the principles expressed in the resolutions already passed, it is the opinion of this meeting that a society should be formed, to be called the "North of England Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in their higher Departments, and in their Application to Manufactures."

On the motion of ROBERT INGHAM, Esq., M. P., seconded by Sir ROBERT SHAFTOE HAWKS,

That it is the opinion of this meeting that the objects of this Society should be to advance the cultivation of the fine arts, by the institution of an academy for the instruction of students in the higher departments of art, and in their application to manufactures; by a collection of books and casts; by lectures; by providing periodical exhibitions, and ultimately a permanent gallery of works of art, to be opened to the public on liberal terms.

On the motion of JOHN BRANDLING, Esq., seconded by the Rev. JOHN COLLINSON,

That the rules drawn up by the Provisional Committee be now read.

The rules having been accordingly read by the Rev. William Turner,

It was resolved,

On the motion of JOHN CLAYTON, Esq., seconded by WILLIAM LOCKEY HARLE, Esq.,

That the rules just read be adopted and printed, that the Society be now considered formed, and such ladies and gentlemen as shall now add their names to the list be considered members.

On the motion of JOHN FENWICK, Esq., seconded by the Rev. WILLIAM HAWKS,

That the Report of the Provisional Committee be printed and circulated.

On the motion of JOHN ADAMSON, Esq., seconded by T. SORWITH, Esq.,

That the resolutions of this meeting be inserted in the various local newspapers, and in one or more London papers.

The Lord Bishop having left the chair,

It was resolved,

On the motion of Sir MATTHEW WHITE RIDLEY, Bart.,
seconded by D. B. WHITE, Esq., M. D.,

That the thanks of the meeting be given to the Lord Bishop of Durham for his continued interest in the formation of the institution, and for his courteous and able conduct in the chair.

RULES.

THIS Society shall be called "The North of England Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts in their higher Departments, and in their Application to Manufactures."

It shall consist of five classes, namely :—

1. Members and Associates ;
2. Lady-Associates ;
3. Young Persons between the Ages of 10 and 21 ;
4. Honorary Members ; and
5. Honorary Members with the Privileges of Class 3.

CLASS I.—MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES.

The members shall consist of professional painters, sculptors, architects, engineers, and engravers ; the associates, of individuals favourable to the cultivation of the fine arts. The members and associates shall each subscribe the annual sum of one guinea. In them shall be vested the sole management of the Society's affairs.

CLASS II.—LADY-ASSOCIATES.

Ladies shall be admissible as associates, paying one guinea annually.

CLASS III.—YOUNG PERSONS BETWEEN THE AGES OF TEN AND TWENTY-ONE.

Young persons, between the ages of ten and twenty one, shall be admissible to all the privileges of members and associates, except those which involve the management of the Society, on paying an annual subscription of half a-guinea.

CLASS IV.—HONORARY MEMBERS.

All persons who have distinguished themselves in any branch of the fine arts, and who shall reside at a greater distance than five miles from Newcastle, shall be eligible as honorary members.

CLASS V.—HONORARY MEMBERS WITH THE PRIVILEGES OF
CLASS III.

It being the object of the Society to promote the cultivation of the fine arts, by diffusing as widely as possible a taste for the beautiful in art, and also to afford assistance, when needed, to individual professors; and as there are generally some persons of talent who are prevented by their circumstances from availing themselves of the advantages of such an institution, the Society shall be empowered to elect any number, not exceeding five, of such persons as honorary members for the space of two years, with the privileges of class 3. Each member of this class shall be re-eligible at the expiration of the above-mentioned period.

ADMISSION OF MEMBERS, &c.

Persons wishing to become members or otherwise of the Society, shall be proposed, in writing, by three members or associates at one monthly meeting, and balloted for at the next, one of the proposers being present both at the time of proposition and election.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

The subscriptions shall be payable in advance, becoming due at each anniversary meeting; and persons elected within three months of the anniversary meeting shall not pay for those three months.

No person shall be entitled to any of the privileges of the Society, unless his subscription in advance for the current year be paid; and if a person shall suffer his subscription to remain unpaid for three successive years, he shall cease to be a member, and shall not again be eligible until all arrears due from him to the Society shall have been paid.

OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY.

A president, eighteen vice-presidents, two secretaries, a treasurer, and a committee of twelve, shall be annually elected out of the class of members and associates—four of the former, and eight of the latter, forming the twelve committee. The mode of election shall be by ballot. A printed list of the members and associates being sent to each of them a few days previous to the anniversary meeting, those chusing to vote shall, at the time of the anniversary meeting, deliver written lists of the persons they shall think proper to form the officers for the ensuing year, such

lists to be placed in a jar by a person stationed for the purpose. At the conclusion of the other business of the meeting, the lists shall be read over, and the names of those elected shall be declared. The president, vice-presidents, secretaries, and treasurer, shall be *ex-officio* members of the committee, any five of whom shall form a quorum. Of the twelve gentlemen forming the committee, no one after serving four years shall be eligible on the fifth; and those three who shall have been least frequent in their attendance at the regular committee meetings during the year, shall not be eligible for the ensuing year, viz.:—one of those chosen from the members, and two from the associates; the names of those who shall become ineligible being marked on the balloting list sent to each member and associate. To the committee shall be entrusted the management of the Society's funds, and all business which does not require to be transacted at the general meetings of the Society. They shall meet once every month, in the week previous to each monthly meeting of the Society, to examine any papers that may be offered for being read to the Society, and to make all necessary arrangements for the general meetings. When any special meeting of the committee shall be required, the secretaries shall send to each member of the committee a notice, stating the time of meeting, and the nature of the business to be transacted. Such special meetings shall be called at the request of at least three members of the committee, notice thereof having been given at least three days previously. At their first meeting every year the general committee shall appoint three of their number to be a house-committee, whose duty it shall be to superintend the various collections of casts, prints, books, paintings, or other works of art belonging to the Society, and all matters connected with the Society's apartments. The committee shall at each anniversary meeting read a report of the Society's proceedings during the past year, a statement of its receipts and expenditure, and a list of the additions to its collections.

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY.

The Committee shall be empowered to purchase, from time to time, such books as they shall consider useful towards furthering the objects of the Society. They shall also form such a collection of casts, from both ancient and modern sculpture, as they shall consider most likely to be of service to the student in art.

The Committee shall procure, as speedily as the Society's funds will allow, a set of anatomical casts for the use of students, for whom they shall also take measures to procure the advantage of lectures on anatomy.

One great object of the Society shall be to form a gallery of works of art; the principle being kept in view, that one good picture or piece of sculpture is to be preferred to many inferior ones.

The Society shall hold, from time to time, exhibitions of works of art, to which artists in all parts of the kingdom shall be invited to contribute.

The Society shall take measures to provide occasional courses of lectures on the various branches of art, for the promotion of which the Society was instituted.

The Society shall make it one of its principal objects to form a school of art, for the instruction of students in drawing, painting, and modelling, and in designing for manufactures. Those students to be allowed the use of the Society's meeting room in the interval between each monthly meeting, under such arrangements as shall be determined upon by the Committee.—Persons wishing to become students shall be recommended to the Society by ticket from a member or associate.

When the students in the school of drawing and design are sufficiently advanced, they shall be eligible for admission to the painting school.

The students in the school of design shall be instructed in perspective and in drawing from such works of art as shall be considered likely to be useful in the branch they are pursuing; but they shall be more particularly instructed in drawing from nature such objects as will be useful in forming designs for the ornamental parts of architecture, cabinet work, iron founding, glass staining, cotton printing, silk working, upholstery, pottery-ware, carpet weaving, and indeed every branch of manufacture to which ornament is applicable.

The expense of instruction in the school of painting, drawing, and design, shall be defrayed out of the Society's funds, towards which such sums as the Committee shall determine shall be contributed by each student in the schools.

Each student, on leaving the school, shall receive a certificate, signed by the president and secretaries, of his attendance in the particular branch in which he has been instructed.

The most distinguished students in the school of painting, drawing, and design, shall be permitted to attend the monthly meetings of the society.

The Society shall offer for open competition certain honorary rewards, the value and nature of which shall be determined by the Committee, for designs for manufactures, and for mechanical inventions.

MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY.

The Society shall meet on the second Friday in each month, at eight o'clock in the evening, to hear papers and hold conversations on subjects connected with the fine arts, and to inspect works of art, to be exhibited by members, whether their own productions or not.

Paintings or other works of art intended for exhibition at the meetings of the Society shall be sent during the day previous to the meeting, and shall remain in the room until the evening of the following day.

At the monthly meetings all business connected with the general government of the Society shall be dispatched, the proposing of and balloting for members shall take place, and then any paper which shall have been approved of by the Committee shall be read, the subject treated of in it be discussed, and the various works of art produced be inspected. Notice of any paper to be read shall be posted up in the Society's rooms, as soon as its fitness shall have been decided upon by the Committee.

No motion shall be taken into consideration at any monthly meeting unless notice shall have been given of its nature and purport at a previous meeting, excepting when the motion relates to that particular meeting only.

BOOKS, CASTS, PRINTS, &c.

At all times, when the Society's rooms shall be open, all works of art, being the property of the Society, shall be accessible to the members, who shall be allowed to take out the books and prints for such times as the Committee shall determine, and under certain fines, if not returned by the appointed time: the member

or associate taking out any of the Society's property being answerable for its return in good order, to replace it if lost, and to pay for any damage it may sustain.

Any member lending a book, &c., to a non-subscriber shall forfeit its value.

No member shall be permitted to take out books, &c., as long as any fines that he may have incurred shall remain unpaid.

No alteration shall be made in any of the foregoing rules, nor any new one proposed, unless at an anniversary meeting, nor excepting notice of the proposed alteration or new law shall have been given at some monthly meeting previous to the anniversary.

The property of this Society shall be vested in trustees for the use and benefit of the Society.

OFFICERS.

PRESIDENT.

THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF DURHAM.
THE RIGHT HON. LORD RAVENSWORTH.
THE RIGHT HON. LORD HOWICK, M.P.
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HON. H. T. LIDDELL, M.P.
HON. T. H. LIDDELL.
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ROBERT INGHAM, Esq., M.P.
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MR. JOHN TURNER.

LIST

OF

MEMBERS, ASSOCIATES, &c.

[The Members are marked in the List with the letter *m*.]

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 James Alexander, M. D.
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 Mw. Anderson, Esq.
 Mr. W. Armstrong, Percy-
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 10 The Rev. Wm. Atkinson.

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 30 R. W. Brandling, Esq.
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 Mr. Thomas Burnet.
 Mr. G. Butterwick.

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 Mr. Thomas Cargill.
 Mr. W. Cargill.
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 60 G. S. Coxwell, Esq.
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 Mr. Abraham Dawson.
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 John Dobson, Esq., *m*.
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 Mr. D. Dunbar, *m*.
 The Rt. Hon. the Earl of
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 The Rt. Rev. the Lord Bi-
 shop of Durham.

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 Mr. James Finlay.

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 90 John Green, Esq., *m*.
 Rev. Robert Green.
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 110 John Hodgson Hinde, Esq.,
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 Mr. John Hodgson, Jun.
 Rev. John Hodgson.
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 Mr. Thomas Horn.
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 120 William Hutt, Esq.
 Mr. Wm. Hutton.

I.

- Robert Ingham, Esq.

J.

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Mr. A. Joel, *under age*.
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L.

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130 Mr. M. Lambert, *m*.
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M. P.
The Hon. T. H. Liddell.
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Mr. W. J. Lowe.

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Mr. H. G. Potter.

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Mr. W. S. Pringle.
Mr. William Proctor.

R.

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Mr. M. H. Rankin.
160 The Rt. Hon. Lord Ravens-
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Mr. John Reay.
Mr. D. Reid.
Mr. M. A. Richardson.
Mr. T. M. Richardson, *m*.
Mr. T. M. Richardson,
Jun., *m*.
Sir M. W. Ridley, Bart.
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